



**POLICY REGARDING OPERATIONS
FOR
NIGHT AERIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION AND DETECTION SERVICES
BETWEEN
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND
FIRE PROTECTION (CAL FIRE)
AND
CITY OF SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT (SDFD)**

Purpose: To establish a policy regarding operations for night aerial fire suppression and detection services. This policy is expressly not intended by the City of San Diego Fire Rescue Department (SDFD) or the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to supersede the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement, including the Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization Operational Area Emergency Plan, Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Operations (Annex B), the California Fire Assistance Agreement, and/or any other agreement for firefighting services in effect at the time this policy is executed, but is merely intended to clarify how the night aerial fire suppression and detection services will be performed under this policy. Nothing in this policy shall limit either the City of San Diego or CAL FIRE from participating in separate agreements with other fire jurisdictions and shall have not effect upon any other already existing mutual aid agreements.

The City of San Diego's Bell 212HP and Bell 412EP multi-engine helicopters are equipped with night-vision-goggle (NVG) compatible lighting and fixed tank systems, making them suitable for night operations. SDFD may conduct night aerial fire suppression and detection services (Services) outside of its geographic jurisdiction and into the geographical jurisdiction of CAL FIRE's State Responsibility Areas (SRA) contained within the County of San Diego. The City of San Diego's equipment and personnel shall be utilized to perform the Services.

Procedures: The following procedures shall be utilized for all Services performed pursuant to this policy.

1. SDFD may perform the Services within CAL FIRE's SRA contained within the County of San Diego, as shown on the map in Attachment A, and incorporated herein by this reference, during night hours.
2. Operations shall be conducted in accordance with the following references, all of which are attached hereto, and incorporated herein by this reference:

1. FIREScope Night Flying Guidelines (February 2007) (Attachment B); and
 2. SDFD NVG Operations Manual Chapter 7 (Revised August 2008) and Go/No-Go Checklist (Attachment C); and
 3. FAA Notice on Night Vision Imaging Systems (N8000.349) (Attachment D).
3. Required Conditions. One of the following conditions must exist before SDFD will consider conducting night aerial fire suppression and detection services under this policy:
1. Lives are threatened;
 2. Structures are threatened; or
 3. High value resources or infrastructure is threatened.

The Incident Commander must request the air assets. CAL FIRE must assess a high probability of mission success prior to any decision to request the aircraft.

4. Aircraft. Aircraft to be utilized shall be limited to multi-engine helicopters with NVG-compatible lighting that meets FAA Type Certification (TC) or Supplemental Type Certification (STC) minimums. Aircraft shall possess current interagency cards with NVG qualification.
5. Aircrew requirements. All personnel participating in NVG operations will, at a minimum, meet the requirements contained in SDFD NVG Operations Manual, Chapter 7 (Revised August 2008) (Attachment C).
6. Pilots. Pilots shall possess current interagency cards with NVG qualification. Pilots must conduct all operations in accordance with the following references, attached as Attachments B, C and D respectively and incorporated herein by this reference:
 1. FIREScope Night Flying Guidelines (February 2007) (Attachment B); and
 2. SDFD NVG Operations Manual Chapter 7 (Revised August 2008) (Attachment C); and
 3. FAA Notice on Night Vision Imaging Systems (N8000.349) (Attachment D).
7. Equipment. Aircrew equipment shall include flight helmets properly modified for NVG usage and ANVIS-9 or better NVGs.
8. Water Drops.
 - a. The use of sirens prior to water drops is required in all instances.

- b. Only one (1) water-dropping helicopter may be utilized over a drop-zone, as defined by CAL FIRE, at any one time.
 - c. Services will not be conducted as an “initial attack”. As defined by CAL FIRE, “initial attack” means the first attack on the fire.
 - d. Services that commence no later than 30 minutes after sunset may be carried into darkness as long as all other provisions of Section 8 are met.
 - e. Prior to conducting any water drops in a particular area, an over-flight survey of that area will be conducted during daylight hours.
 - f. During all night water drops, positive communications are required.
 - g. It is preferred that no ground crews be in the area while water drops are conducted. If it is not possible to avoid the use of ground crews in the water dropping area, ground personnel will be required to provide visible lighting to helicopters conducting night water dropping operations. This lighting, however, will be such as not to become a safety hazard for aircrews.
9. Other Services, including but not limited to, reconnaissance and fire mapping, may be conducted without prior daytime over-flight survey of the area. These missions shall maintain an altitude of no lower than 500 feet above ground level (AGL).
 10. NVG helibases and fill-points shall be pre-approved by SDFD NVG-trained personnel.
 11. Flight Operation Prerequisites. Prior to any launch, a risk assessment and go/no-go checklist must be performed by SDFD. CAL FIRE Aviation Operations shall approve the risk assessment and go/no-go checklist prior to any launch.
 12. Flight Operation Requirements. Flight operations shall be conducted pursuant to weather minimums contained in Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 91.155 (Basic VFR Weather Minimums), attached as Attachment E, and incorporated herein by this reference. Inadvertent Instrument Meteorological Conditions [IIMC] procedures must be in place and briefed prior to any launch.
 13. Where any terms and/or procedures contained in Attachments B, C and/or D differ from and/or conflict with any terms of this policy, the terms and/or procedures contained in this policy shall apply to the extent permitted by

law and any existing agreements of either the City of San Diego or CAL FIRE.

14. This policy shall become effective as of the date signed by both SDFD and CAL FIRE.

Howard Windsor
Chief, San Diego Unit, CAL FIRE

Date

Tracy Jarman
Fire Chief, San Diego Fire-Rescue

Date